



STATE SENATOR
BRUCE PATTERSON
IN THE LOOP ★

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Legislative News

Health Care Opt-Out Resolution

Federal Government Intrusion

Senator Patterson introduced a resolution that would allow Michigan residents to opt-out of any federal health care system. Senate Joint Resolution R proposes a constitutional amendment designed to block national health care reform legislation.

"The federal government is impeding on the rights of citizens to choose their health care. We don't need bureaucrats in Washington D.C. telling us what to do," Senator Patterson said. "This resolution reiterates the message that the federal government should stay out of our health care decisions."

The resolution is now before the Health Policy Committee and testimony was taken on both sides of the issue. Committee Chairman Senator George said that a committee vote is expected in the near future.

Stay tuned for more developments. You can also follow the progress of this resolution or any other legislation by going to:

<http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>

Smoke-free Michigan

Ban takes effect May 1st!

Public places in Michigan, including restaurants and bars, will be smoke-free under legislation supported by Senator Patterson and recently signed into law.

Senator Patterson said that his support of the bill was clinched when a constituent visited the Capitol and gave him a copy of the Surgeon General's report on second-hand smoke. Senator Patterson read the report and the evidence showed that there was no safe amount of second hand smoke.

"People have to find work. They shouldn't have to put their health in jeopardy on the job."

Expanding Michigan's smoking ban will improve the health of the state's residents while reducing health care costs. Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke are two reasons Michigan is one of the unhealthiest states in the nation.

Public Act 188 of 2009 bans smoking, starting May 1, in all public places except cigar bars, tobacco specialty retail stores and the gaming floors of the three Detroit casinos.

While businesses conforming to the law will not be penalized if individuals are caught smoking in their establishments, the bill creates penalties for those who fail to comply with the new regulations. Businesses could be subject to a civil fine of \$100 for a first offense and up to \$500 for subsequent offenses.

TEXTING LEGISLATION NEEDS TO BE TOUGHER

Senator Patterson objects to secondary offense

The Michigan State Senate passed legislation that would make it illegal to send or read a text message while driving. The bill makes it a secondary offense. This means that the police have to pull a motorist over for another violation, like speeding before a ticket for texting could be given.

Senator Patterson believes that the bill does not go far enough. The Senator introduced an amendment that would make texting while driving a primary enforcement law.

"We must make this a real law. To make it a secondary enforcement suggests great insult, an insult to law enforcement officers everywhere. This calls into question the ability of law enforcement professionals to enforce the law and do their job," Patterson stated while trying to persuade his colleagues to pass his amendment. The amendment was voted down.

To hear Senator Patterson's remarks on the Senate floor regarding texting while driving legislation, go to:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senators/podcasts.asp?District=7>

Shutoff Protection Bills Become Law *Bill safeguards municipal customers*

Senator Patterson's legislation that was a part of a package of bills aimed at protecting customers of municipal power companies from having their power shut-off has become law. The Senator's bill in the package permits the attorney general or a customer to bring a civil action against a municipal utility in shutoff cases involving injury or death. It also requires the municipal utility to establish a complaint resolution process for its customers.

With this package of bills becoming law, customers of municipal utilities now have the same protection against shutoffs that regulated utilities customers receive.

Race to the Top Federal Dollars *Education is not a Federal Issue*

The Michigan Legislature passed legislation that could make the state eligible for \$400 million in Race to the Top grants from the U.S. Department of Education. The legislation enacts several key education reforms to improve Michigan schools.

Senator Patterson said that education is not a federal issue and that according to the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, education is a state matter.

"As a duly - elected state senator, the very first obligation imposed upon me by the Michigan Constitution {Article XI, section 1} is to swear an Oath of Office. In so doing, I am thereafter obligated to abide by the law in order of their sanctity and priority. That said, the federal government has begun the usurpation of our authority through the insidious use of "bribes."

"Either take the "so - called" federal money [bribe] and abide by our terms; or, you don't get the money."

"In my mind, this most recent scheme is a nefarious attempt to radically alter the grand plan laid down by our Founding Fathers when they established our Nation and the respective states ratified the United States Constitution. By falling victim to this temptation of Race to the Top funds, the future of our children and grandchildren, born and as yet unborn, will be eroded and eventually denied due to the enormous debt obligation incurred and left to them to repay."

The following article by Senator Patterson was recently published in the Canton Chamber of Commerce Newsletter.

Cap and Trade Kills Jobs

As the Chairman of Michigan's Senate Standing Committee on Energy Policy for the past seven years and as a member of the Natural Resource and Environmental Affairs Senate Committee for my entire tenure in the state legislature, I bring to you the knowledge and the experience to discuss the issue of Cap and Trade. I have studied the matter intensely and have taken testimony from a broad cross section of recognized experts. I am here to state that Cap and Trade is climate control legislation that is a job killer.

This program will negatively affect the business environment, especially in Michigan. It would result in immediately raising the costs of energy produced through the use of fossil fuel. There is no doubt that the additional costs at this unprecedented time in our country's history would devastate the economy.

I co-sponsored a resolution to the United State Congress to oppose the implementation of a cap and trade program. This is a federal issue but, as your State Senator, it is still a great concern of mine and it should be a concern of yours. This affects all of us.

In its simplest form, cap and trade is when an authority, such as a government, sets a limit or *cap* on the amount of a pollutant that can be emitted by a group. The groups are given emission permits or an allowance that represents the amount that they can emit. When they exceed the permitted amount, they must buy credits from those groups that emit less than them. This is the *trade* part of the equation.

Do not be fooled by reports that cap and trade will help save the environment. This program will stagnate job growth and hurt those states that rely most on manufacturing, especially Michigan.

Cap and trade will hurt businesses by increasing the cost of goods and services. Companies will have to pay more for their energy needs. It will particularly hurt Michigan manufacturers, where the energy needs are greatest. Estimates of net job losses associated with cap and trade are 1.2 million to 2.3 million by 2015. That is just five years from now!

To stay viable, some businesses will have to reduce or eliminate their cap and trade costs by moving their businesses out of the U. S. They will move to other countries that don't have a tax on carbon or a cap on greenhouse emissions.

Given the very likely combination of significantly higher domestic manufacturing costs and other nations refusing to enact restrictions, we could experience a substantial outsourcing of jobs to those nations with lower energy costs.

If businesses move their manufacturing to another country how is that reducing their carbon footprint? All it is doing is shifting it to the other side of the

planet. It will still have the same effect. If a business moves to China, they will still be emitting the same amount of pollutants; they just won't be taxed for it.

Cap and trade is just another way to tax and regulate one of our basic needs. We don't need more regulation or more money taken out of our pocket. What we need is affordable forms of energy with less regulation.

Useful Information

Money and Energy Saving Ideas

Appliance Cash for Clunkers

Cash for Clunkers incentives are now available for appliances. Rebates are available when old appliances are replaced with energy efficient models. Michigan has received \$6.6 million in federal funds to finance the rebates. The rebates will continue until the money runs out.

To register, go to:

<http://www.mirebates.com/>

After filing out the rebate form, the form is mailed with the receipt to the state and then a prepaid Visa card in the amount of the rebate will be mailed to the consumer. Rebates are \$25 to \$100, depending on the appliance and the energy rating. Furnace and water heater rebates run \$100 to \$300.

Matching rebates are also available through utility companies.

Go to:

<http://www.dsireusa.org/> to see a list of offerings in Michigan.

Save \$\$ and Energy

Follow the steps below to save on utility bills.

- Up to \$90 per year can be saved by activating the power-save function on your computer. Turn off your monitor when not in use for over 20 minutes and turn off your computer when away for more than two hours.
- Reduce the brightness setting on your TV. Select the home mode because, the retail or vivid mode uses up to 25% more power. You can also activate the energy and power saving modes on your TV and other appliance and save about \$43 per year.
- Video game consoles use nearly the same amount of power when they are turned on and left idle as they do when actively playing a game. Save more than \$100 a year by turning off your gaming system when not in use.

- Wash your clothes in cold water. You'll reduce your bill by about \$18 per year and it is better for the clothes. Even switching from hot to warm water can cut the load's energy use by half.

For more money and energy savings ideas, click on the article below.

http://green.yahoo.com/blog/the_conscious_consumer/121/energy-vampires-is-it-worth-it-to-unplug-your-electronics.html

Also, go the Department of Energy for more tips.

<http://www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm>

Unemployment Issues

If you are experiencing problems receiving your unemployment benefits, go to Senator Patterson's website www.senatorbrucepatterson.com and click on the Unemployment Office banner. Fill out the form and Senator Patterson's office will contact you and assist you with your problem.

Beware of Investment Fraud

The Office of Financial and Insurance Regulation (OFIR) is warning consumers of the risk of investment fraud. You can contact the OFIR before you invest any money and they will run a check on any broker or advisor. In these tough economic times, scams are rampant, especially in the investment business so it is best to be prepared.

If you have any questions about an investment firm, professional or product, contact the OFIR toll-free at (877) 999-6442 or online at www.michigan.gov/ofir

Around the District

District Office Hours

Friday, February 19th

10:30am to 12noon

Huron Township Hall

22950 Huron River Drive

New Boston

Friday, March 5th

1:00pm to 2:30pm

Canton Public Library
1200 S. Canton Center Road
Canton

Friday, March 19th
10:30am to 12noon

Next Chapter Bookstore & Bistro
141 E. Main Street
Northville

Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via email, please contact my office at senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you! Visit www.senatorbrucepatterson.com

If you would like to not receive any future emails, simply reply to this message with the word "remove" in the body of the message. Thank you!

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